

BLUE GRASS BLADE

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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Creation

(By Mrs. J. J. Fykes.)

Six thousand years this earth through space bath rolled?
More than six million would be nearer truth!
When Adam lived she had outlived her youth,
Ages ere Eden bloomed the world was old!

Ah, many million eons must have passed
Since the first sun through heaven's dome did speed,
Since the first star did circle through the vast—
If a first star theré ever was indeed.

They were not meant as candles with their light
To cheer our hearts and guard us from all ill;
They were not made as ornaments for night—
Older than earth, a purpose they fulfill.

The tropic fruits that petrified are found
In cold Siberia's mines, a tale can tell
Of ages past, when tropic beauty gownéd
The arctic lands where bear and reindeer dwell.

Then came the glacial period!—Sleet and snow!
Frozen in ice the mighty mammoth died—
In arctic circles found his tusks and hide
Conception give us of the long ago.

And when the age af man dawned upon earth—
Eons and eons passed. Who'll count them, say?
Races waxed great, declined and passed away,
And empires were as they had ne'er had birth.

We hear of Babylon, of Nineveh,
Of Carthage, Thebes and Tyre—Ah, but they,
Queen cities in their pride, their luxury,
Are only of the race of yesterday!

Who knows but that even great cities may
Lie buried underneath the ages' pall?
Nations whose memory man may not recall—
Forgotten, dead, though earth they once did sway!

Still man, when first created, was not—no,
A perfect being who through sin did fall.
Dominion death had ever over all
That conscious or unconscious life did know.

Primeval man was nearer to the brute
Than man in later ages! Perfect? Nay!
Trace evil back to him, not to Eve's fruit.
Sin sprang from instincts he must needs obey.

San Francisco, Calif.

A. J. Parker
High and Ashland East Side
Sep 28 1909

Spirit of the Times

Full Text of An Address Delivered Before The Recent Buckeye Secular Union Convention at Columbus, Ohio.

(By J. Atwood Culbertson)

The Spirit of the Times, with respect to Freethought and religion, is toward a broader welcome for and understanding of the ever living echoes of the great truths voiced by Free-thinkers dead and living. To come to a proper appreciation of the present trend of thought it is necessary to compare the thought that measured the ages of the past with that of the present. Since entering the arena of thought reform Freethought has had to battle a multitude of gods. Through her untiring efforts most of these gods are now physically and mentally incapacitated. Each god in his time and turn had to submit to many changes to suit the peculiar whims of each generation. The most righteous god idea I have ever read about is the one advanced by Thomas Paine, which is to say, that if a liberty loving, humane and honest man begets a god it is a righteous one. The most infamous god idea with which I am acquainted is the Christian. The Christian god is the one with which we are most concerned. Like other gods, Jehovah has been deprived of many of his original powers. His creators would hardly recognize him if shown the battered scheme today, "Active" gods have ever been intolerant until dead and buried. Therefore, the Christian god must die—he must be pruned of the powers attributed to him by his followers and relegated to the realm of dead things. The people have always had a god such as they desire and as the present Christian issue is each day growing more obnoxious to thinking people, Jehovah is about to pass into oblivion. He is about to harvest his last crop of humanity for hell.

When Christianity adopted Jehovah, the god of the ancient Jews, he was, so far as Christendom was concerned, a mere babe—an alien foundling without power. For three hundred years and more his handful of followers battled to elevate him to a place of recognition among the ruling gods, courting death at the hands of Pagan fanatics to do so. In the early part of the fourth century when Constantine—Constantine the Great—was waging war against Maxentius, he affects to accept the Christian religion, and by the use of his murderous sword Christianity was lifted to a position of power. It was Constantine's ambition to be Emperor of all the Roman Empire. He was about to engage Maxentius in battle before the City of Rome in what is known as the battle of Milvian Bridge, and believing that the Roman generals had secured the favor of the Roman gods he commenced to reconnoiter for some other god who could turn the tide of battle and bring him victory. At this time no one doubted the efficacy of prayer and every one believed that battles were won by the intervention of supernatural powers, and as Constantine's predecessors had failed miserably he was suspicious of the Roman gods. He, therefore, turned to the Christian deity whom no Roman general had ever recognized and who had never been tried out in conflict. In fervent prayer he asked this god "To declare himself who he was." Of course the god did not fail him; it was not Constantine's purpose to let him do so. What happened? Authorities differ as to what occurred at about this time, but Eusebius says that on this day just after high noon, the Emperor, lifting his eyes to the scintillating skies beheld the figure of a cross. It was located just above the sun and was

a sight of great splendor. Blazoned thereon was the inscription, "Conquer by This." What next? His army must see the sign from heaven as they must have confidence in this new found power when they march to battle. Anything that Constantine saw and pointed out to them they could see, of course, whether it was there or not, as in those days it was the custom to see, hear and think by proxy. The story continues that on the night after the vision Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream (same old way) bearing the radiant sign that had been seen in the heavens. The next day he summoned Christian teachers and they told him that "Christ was God, the only begotten Son of the one true God, and that the vision he had seen was the symbol of immortality of the victory which Christ had won over death."

Such is the story by Eusebius, the church historian. There are many others, however, which differ very materially. Some tell a different story about the sign, and others say he saw a celestial army marching through the heavens. Eusebius attempts to establish the truthfulness of his story by declaring that Constantine took a royal oath—whatever that means—that he saw a cross. As much as authorities differ about the story of the vision, they all agree that Constantine sought the favor of the Christian god. It is well to note, however, that the story as told by Eusebius did not appear until the year 337, the year of Constantine's death, and twenty-five years or more after the alleged event. Eusebius first tells the story in his "Life of Constantine," but he says nothing about the event in his "History of the Church" which appeared in the year 326, fourteen years after the vision.

Having arranged for the necessary supernatural aid Constantine charged the cavalry of Maxentius and victory was his at the first encounter. Maxentius' forces left the field in disorder and in their efforts to escape many were slaughtered at Milvian Bridge, which collapsed, and Maxentius was drowned. This victory turned the tide for Christianity. The pagans could no longer ignore the Christian god as he had won a battle and was now in good repute. Elevated to a place of recognition among the various prevailing religions, Christians at once commenced to war among themselves and we learn of many appeals to Constantine to settle disputes between warring sects.

Such is the story of the rise of Christianity to a place of good repute among religions. She owes her life to the sword in the hands of Constantine the Great, that human brute, who had his wife murdered in a boiling bath. Sopater, his friend, he put to death. Licinius, his sister's husband, he strangled. Crispus, his son, he ordered beheaded. This same Constantine repented on his death bed, was baptized according to the Christian faith, and passed into the great unknown cleansed of his crimes. Such is Christian justice.

Friends, this god whom Christendom's leaders hold up to the world as a god of love and mercy is the god of the criminal and ancient Jews, bearing all the characteristics of that barbarous tribe. As compared with the criminals and friends of our day he stands like a towering oak in a wilderness of underbrush. This so-called omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent being is credited by his supporters with having created and populated the earth. Then, friend that he is, after he had permitted the people of his own mould and making to multiply for centuries, he becomes dissatisfied, so the story goes, and decided to wipe them from the face of the earth with the ex-

ception of a single family of eight persons. This family he saved to again populate the earth. Some centuries later he concluded he had made a second mistake, and then, to redeem all the "sinners" of the world, he decided he would have to come to earth in the form of man. To accomplish this he committed adultery with a virgin, shifted the responsibility to the holy ghost, and in regulation time was born a male babe, being as much amazed over the wonders of his great toes as any other child born of woman. This hybrid offspring, the mandeity, permitted a man of finite intelligence to deceive him, in consequence of which he was crucified on a cross and this shedding of blood, we are told, was for the redemption of sinners. According to the Christian narrative we find that their god, all-powerful, all-wise, infinite and supreme, so claimed, has tried three times to make his children on earth—products of his divine wisdom and power—moral and pure, murdering and being murdered in order to do so. But those efforts were without their looked for results, and now after more than nineteen hundred years have passed since Christendom's god committed adultery with a virgin for the purpose of saving the world, we are still in need of a saviour. But friends, the savior mankind needs is not one born of a virgin and conceived by a ghost, nor a god pilfered from a barbarian tribe—the saviour of mankind must be reasoned-out truth, a golden fountain spouting forth its sparkling volumes of Love, Hope and Mercy.

While Christians are forced to admit the god whom they kidnapped from the Jews has made three grand failures in attempting to populate the world with people of his liking, they still declare him their one best bet. To uphold his name they have tortured, burned and imprisoned. The history of Christianity is a solid record of crime. There is the history of the Crusades with twenty million victims as the price. There is the Inquisition with its countless dead, with its instruments of torture such as the rack, the thumbscrew and the dungeon. There is Torquemada, a Christian brute, with his thousands slain. There is the Christian Calvin, whose twenty-four years' reign in Geneva, a city of 10,000 inhabitants, saw three hundred persons officially murdered, most of whom were women charged with being witches and possessed of devils. This same Calvin burned Michael Servetus at the stake for the unpardonable offense of having written a book. There is Luther, the intolerant.

There is the history of witchcraft with its countless victims strewn along Christendom's shores, which still springs up and claims a victim now and then. Murder has been the chief virtue of Christianity wherever it has controlled the throttle of State. Every page of the church's history is covered with the crimson blood of the innocent. And in the face of the facts, if the Christian god is all-powerful and ever-present, I charge him with being an accessory to all of Christianity's crimes. I charge them who committed murder and torture in his name as being morally inferior to the men and women murdered and tortured. If Christians were criminals and brutes in the past, when did they rise to be superiors of non-believers and indifferentists, as they claim today? That is to say, When did Christians rise to be superiors of the great men and women of the past and present whose only weapons in defense of their thoughts has been studied reason and sound argument. Why are they entitled to a permanent berth in a realm of eternal joy prepared only for the elect and good?

What are we to think of a god of "love and mercy" who stood for centuries a silent spectator and allowed men and women to be persecuted, murdered, flayed and burned alive in order that Christian leaders could impress upon the minds of the populace that their god and the authority of the church must not be questioned. I demand of the Christians to know how far removed their god is from their devil. Arraigned before the bar of Reason the Christian god is found guilty of

all the infamous crimes upon the criminal calendar, villainous enough to excite the envy of the most blood thirsty criminal, heinous enough to put to shame the record of the proudest yeggman.

Such is the record of the Christian god and church, which was not made by solicitation nor under duress, and it is by that record they must stand. That same old church is still in our midst. And do we hear her apologizing for her cruelties and malicious errors of the past? No; but in her old deceptive way she is proclaiming that she is an institution of charity and mercy. We see her trying to administer an anaesthetic to the popular mind by building hospitals, orphan asylums, etc., (in amusing contrast to her manners of the past) with money from the pockets of the poor. In this way she hopes to keep herself well advertised with the purpose of leading credulous minds to believe that her hospital and orphans' home actions are only repetitions of her manners of the past. This same old church, with a record as dark and cruel as could possibly have been made is still with us, trying to veneer her dark deeds with what she is pleased to call righteousness. Friends, are we going to submit to an anaesthetic from which we must sooner or later be aroused only to find that we have been deceived by that monumental tyrant of the past—the Christian church? Are we, god-like, going to stand idly by and permit this insatiate demon of superstition to fasten upon the minds of the children and credulous of this country the iron-like shackles of faith, creed and tradition?

Claiming to be possessed of full and absolute truth concerning every question regarding life and death, revealed to them in Holy Writ, Christians have ever refused to give consideration to Reason's arguments. But the efforts of Freethinkers, Reason's most earnest advocates, have wrought a change. Freethinkers long since declared their independence from the alleged decrees of gods, manned the pilot wheel of intellect with the power of pure reason, steered their Monitor of truth and justice into the turbulent stream of life and defied Christianity to turn the broadsides of her Merrimac of superstition to battle. Matchless men of the type of Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, Voltaire, Franklin, Paine and Ingersoll, endowed with a love for mental liberty, have poured volumes of logic and reason into the once polluted stream of learning until it is becoming clarified and pure. Great changes are taking place, and each day sees more men and women thinking and ridding their minds of the iron hand of Christian superstition.

Don't understand me to mean that there is no longer a lurking in the breasts of the orthodox ruling powers of Christianity that characteristic spirit which spurred Christendom's leaders to the atrocious acts of burning Bruno and Joan of Arc. The ruling powers are only meek and tolerant because people will no longer submit to their infamous practices. They have only laid down the sword and fagot through force of circumstance. They still stand in the road of truth, battling the efforts of investigators, always the last to acknowledge as tenable the new discoveries of science. It is still the practice of the orthodox to submit every theory to their creeds and bibles, and if the theory does not harmonize with their "holy" works it is rejected as false. As evidence of the battle they are waging against the progress of science, witness the following from the annual report of the Bible League of North America, quoted by the August, 1909, number of The Gospel Messenger, which is in its nature a protest:

"The Christian church is in the midst of one of the most appalling Crises in the history of Christendom. The false teachings of Radical Criticism, introduced from Germany in the name of "scholarship" and appealing to the "natural man," have swept over the church like a devastating flood, destroying faith

in the foundations of Christianity, and the Bible as God's authoritative revelation of salvation.

"One peculiar feature of the situation is that, whereas in the past the destroyers of the Faith have commonly been men of the world, outside of churches, today they are inside the churches—leaders in a great scholastic apostasy, intrenched in the foremost positions of power, in its pulpits, its press, its homes, its educational institutions, and even its theological seminaries, poisoning all the springs of its life."

Let us ask what are the springs of life of Faith? Are they not superstition, tradition, emotion and desire? Imagine, if you can, scientific investigation poisoning the mind against the springs of truth.

Then there is that mother church of Christian superstition, the Roman Catholic, ever-present with a protest against supplanting her antiquated notions and doctrines with modern ideas and new truths. We still find her claiming that all marriages are made in heaven and, therefore, indissoluble. She still proclaims that her god is the chief matrimonial agent for the world and vehemently disputes that he is a miserable failure in the office, even in the face of the many pitiful and unhappy unions she must see every day.

The orthodox people of today, holding the reins of church, find much pleasure in emptying themselves of long and loud discourses about liberty, mental freedom, freedom of speech, and the right to worship according to the dictates of one's conscience. Note that they demand that one must worship. They will grant "religious liberty" and "mental freedom" so long as one is willing to worship in some way their god. But what happens if one cannot conscientiously worship or acknowledge a god? He is at once shamefully denounced and vilified by being called by all the calumnious epithets their Christian minds can manufacture.

Happily the dark storm has broken. The efforts of the church today are only passing clouds of superstition shadowing the shining sun of Reason. Just two months ago we learned of the New York Presbytery ordaining one Rev. George A. Fitch who denied the historical identity of Adam and Eve, the virgin birth of Christ, the resurrection of the saviour and the raising of Lazarus. This by a vote of seven to ten. Presbyterians have not yet decided on which side the devil was working during the casting of the votes. Only recently we heard of the Connecticut State Legislature passing a new Sunday statute intended to supplant the old law which has been in force since 1722. Connecticut's "blue laws," always a disgrace to the State, stood at floodtide with Christian sentiment, but they are now being supplanted by statutes which would have been considered infidel in spirit had they been enacted in the 18th century. We find the great State of Pennsylvania, a hotbed of Presbyterianism, recently enacting a law putting Freethinkers on an equal footing with Christians in giving testimony in court, which is nothing less than a confession from these Christian legislators that they no longer consider Freethinkers a set of liars, and that they are convinced a man can tell the truth without believing in the supernatural. We also learn of France striking "God" from her oaths. Friends, let me say to you that every law written in the statute books is an admission that the so-called divine laws are inadequate for the governing of man.

Yes, with at one time all the world against us, battling us with sword and statute, fire and dungeon, we are making rapid strides toward the goal of our ambition. It is true, as the Bible League has stated in its resolution of protest, that the "destroyers of the Faith who are inside the churches—leaders in a great scholastic apostasy, intrenched in the foremost positions of power," etc. Indeed, friends, the destroyers of the Faith are everywhere. People are growing ashamed of a re-

ligion without sense, which promises to save the few and dam the many.

The Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, Pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, in his "The Influence of Christ in Modern Life" which is an elaborate apology for the errors of his colleagues and Christianity in general, says:

"Christian evolution has also changed our idea of man. Slowly it is undermining the old view of the fall that sees each Aristotle as the ruins of an Adam, substituting, instead, man as beginning in a low and savage state, and under the providential oversight of God, slowly moving upward toward refinement, culture and character."

This evolutionary view, about which the Rev. Hillis has attempted to throw a Christian veil, is purloined from the science that acknowledges no god. This view of the Rev. Hillis is infidel in character and shows him as having responded to the ever working laws of evolution, standing mentally free head and shoulders above his colleagues, teaching doctrines directly in opposition to the fundamental principles of Christianity. The Rev. Hillis says further:

"As the infantile life develops, it enters into and passes through the likeness of each lower animal and, journeying ever upward, carries with it the special grace and gift of each creature that is left behind, sometimes a bone or muscle or ganglion, until the excellences of all the lower animals are compacted in man's little body. Many organs useful in the lower realm are found only in rudimentary form in man. Drummond says the body contains seventy vestigial structures like the vermiform appendix. Indeed the human body seems like an old curocity shop, a museum of obsolete anatomies and outgrown organs. Take away the theory that man has risen from a lower animal condition, and these unused organs have absolutely no explanation. With such facts before us it is as foolish to assert that man is not related to the animal creation as to assert that the ferns marked in the coal strata and the fishes found in the layers of rocks throw no light upon the events of geology. Strangely enough, some are unwilling to believe that God created the body progressively through animals, but are quite willing to believe that he created it immediately from a clod in the Garden of Eden."

Friends, the Rev. Hillis has uttered blasphemy pure and simple, but like most blasphemy, it is truth. No doubt the Rev. Hillis preaches to a people who read and are awake to the current trend of thought and investigation. He preaches to a congregation who will not tolerate the ignorant doctrine of the Christian past. They pay him to preach the new and up-to-date, and he must conform to their ideas. Behold, The Spirit of the Times, has aroused the sleepers in the pews out of their slumbers and now they are dictating to the pulpit; man is dictating to the ambassadors of god. This in decided contrast to the circuit rider who has a congregation of dormant minds and preaches as he pleases, giving them hell fire and brimstone morning, noon and night. But the preacher who talks about hell fire, miracles, ghosts and immaculate conceptions as matters of fact is about to go. Soon he will only be found preserved in a glass case in a museum marked, "A species of the Christian sky-pilot, now extinct, existing as late as the early part of the twentieth century, who preached damnation for the many and eternal happiness for the few."

Mr. Harold Bolee in a series of articles which recently appeared in the Cosmopolitan magazine, has shown that the professors in our great universities and colleges have thrown off the shackles of creed and so-called divine law. Released from behind the walls of blind faith and putrid superstition, these

professors now roam in the fertile fields of scientific investigation giving to the people of the world the results of their labors. These educators no longer stop to inquire while in the midst of some research to know whether or not their method of procedure conforms with the laws of Holy Writ. They go in search of truth with no thought of gods. They recognize that truth is the only power that can save man from a hell of error.

As further evidence of the fact that orthodox Christianity is fast decaying before the corroding influence of the light of science, let us note the present membership of the Christian churches in the United States today. With a population of upwards of 90,000,000 people the church only claims about 33,000,000 at the most, as members, which includes the padded list, many who have been dead for years, those who have moved and are forgotten except that their names are on the books, and the many whose religion is held in the names of wives and parents. But taking the figures at their face we find that there are 57,000,000 people in the United States who hold Christian teachings in suspicion. About the present membership of the churches Dr. McFarland is quoted in the Presbyterian Banner of August 19, 1909, as saying, "Of all the people in the world who profess Christianity, the great majority, probably not less than seven-eighths, entered upon the Christian life, or made the Christian profession, under the age of seventeen." This statement by Dr. McFarland is as much as to say that the churches are not converting mature minds to their belief, but are recruiting their followers by playing upon the fears and unreason of the immature.

After battling for centuries against overwhelming odds Truth is about to emerge the victor. We have seen that gods can only live so long as the mind is imprisoned and that they decay and die with the coming of mental freedom. We now have the churches on the retreat. Some preachers, ostrich-like, are trying to save the day by hiding their heads under what they are pleased to call 'Christian evolution,' as the Rev. Hillis would say, or 'theistic evolution' as Dr. Lyman Abbott calls evolution. While we have the forces of Christianity scattered and in disorder it is high time for us to rally for the last charge. To do this The Spirit of the Time is crying for us to organize. The time is ripe for a National Freethought Organization to help in continuing the flood of "Radical Criticism" which strikes hard at the dikes of Christian superstition. We now have standing at our sides the great Universities, learned apostates and the men of science. We cannot afford to let the opportunity pass. We cannot all be college graduates, scientific men and women, nor doctors of philosophy, but we can support the great Freethought leaders and encourage them to keep up the battle.

The Spirit of the Times demands that we throw off our small differences. If we are to win this fight we must organize and take into battle the whole complement of Freethought minds and have concerted action. Why are we Freethinkers known as Liberals, Humanitarians, Rationalists, Agnostics, Atheists and Materialists? This wrangling over names must end. We must get on some common ground. Agnosticism, the ground of Ingersoll, it occurs to me is a compromising ground on which all may stand, if we will, without sacrificing any self-respect. To become Agnostic is to say that we know that we do not know anything that will satisfactorily explain all the many questions about the wonders of life and the future. Simmered down that is the position every honest man must take. Then, too, it is time for each of us to sacrifice a little of our opinion out of respect for the opinion of others, so long as they agree with us in fundamental principles. The question of whether or not there is a god seems to be the main point that has caused the greatest breach in the ranks of Freethought. Most Freethinkers say they do not know. They are broad-minded. Some say positively that there is no god. They are dogmatic. But

friends, have you ever stopped to think how little difference a god really makes? If there is or is not a god arguments cannot change the fact. There is, however, one thing about which all Freethinkers are agreed, and that is that there is associated with the god idea a great deal of superstition. When we have stripped the idea of all the superstition with which it is clothed there will be but little of the god left. When the Christian god is stripped to the flesh he will have to go the same way as all other gods that have been undressed. The question of whether or not there is a god is of minor importance and is not of sufficient import as to afford good cause for a disruption in our ranks.

Friends, with our resources controlled by the guiding hand of a National Freethought Organization, which The Spirit of the Times is calling for, I can see the future rising before us like a dream. Just as with the passing of the night there comes the dawn, with the passing of religious superstition there comes intellectual day, with which we are face to face. For centuries the rising sun of Reason has been striving hard to break over the horizon of the East. She is up and in the eight o'clock of her morn. She is shedding her luminous rays of Truth upon the world of thought and action, permeating every cloud of fear and superstition which have so long shadowed the intellect.

Let me close by saying, as I have said many times before, that the time is fast approaching when Christians will be forced to take inventory of all the suffering their damnable doctrines have caused, and if they have left within their breasts one spark of humane feeling, they will become apologizing supplicants before the army of men and women who have fought for mental liberty and truth, and on bended knees they will cry out for just one magic word to quiet the stormy seas of pain and anguish whose angry waves beat them against the sharpened rocks of shame—they will ask to be FORGIVEN.

Sewickley, Penn.

Dr. Hausman's book is being rushed into the binding department and we hope to have it ready for delivery before the end of this month. Get ready to help us circulate it.

We are pleased to learn from the news columns of the Cleveland papers that Brother T. C. Jefferies, of that city, has started the organization of a society of Freethinkers with fair prospects before him. The papers report that he has already secured a membership of fifteen and while no public meetings are yet being held, plans are in vogue for a system of propaganda by the new organization. Only a few years ago there were large numbers of Freethinkers in the big city on the lake, and it is hardly probable that their numbers show any sign of falling off. The Blade wishes Brother Jefferies and his associates, the greatest possible success.

It is recorded that Daniel Webster once wrote: "Heaven's gates are not so highly arched as prince's palaces; they that enter there must go upon their knees," and that aptly describes the mental attitude of the Christian believer, for it demands a complete human subjugation, a sort of piteous whining and begging, instead of striving to deserve admission by good actions. Any man entitled to enter heaven ought to be able to go in with his head up, proudly erect, the fire of triumph in his eye.

Buckeye Secular Union Convention

Full Report of Proceedings—The Convention in Detail—Splendid Gathering—Election of Officers—Dr. Wilson on List—Song, Music and Speech Brightened the Day.

(By J. Atwood Culbertson.)

Report of The Seventh Annual Session of the Buckeye Secular Union Held in Schenck's Hall, 335 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio, Sunday, September 12th, E. M. 309.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:50 a. m. by President Geo. O. Roberts.

Music: The convention was opened by a duet rendered on the piano by the Misses Kail. These young ladies furnished entertaining music throughout the day.

The Paine and Ingersoll songs were much appreciated. Everyone seemed to be aroused by the spirit of these songs, and Libby Culbertson Maedonald, better known as Mrs. E. M. Maedonald, wife of the late Editor of the Truthseeker, was heartily applauded.

Miss Smith and some gentleman whose name I do not now recall also rendered entertaining music.

Address of Welcome: The address of welcome was delivered by Dr. C. S. Carr of Columbus. The Doctor is a well known and much talked of man in Columbus and in fact throughout the United States. He is a Freethinker, broad minded and of a forgiving nature. In the course of his remarks he said that he had been severely criticised in Columbus for having accepted an invitation to be with the convention during the day and welcome the members and sympathizers of the Buckeye Secular Union to Columbus.

He asked us to spare the preachers whom he maintains are pitiful objects when seen in their studies trying to think out something that will please their congregation and insure bread and butter for their children. Doctor Carr wants us to think that churches of today are good institutions and that they are broad and liberal. He states that while he is a Freethinker he has been superintendent of an orthodox Sunday School for fourteen years. He often fills pulpits in the various churches throughout the city of Columbus and says that he never compromises himself. The Doctor summed up by saying that he could answer his critics by saying that we Freethinkers, whatever else we may be in the minds of Christians, we are human beings after all and therefore entitled to a hearty welcome.

Response: Mr. Simon of New York responded to Dr. Carr's address of welcome very admirably.

Appointment of Committee and Reading Clerk—Reading Clerk: Mr. D. W. Sanders, of Covington, Ind., was appointed Reading Clerk for the convention. Mr. Sanders proceeded with his duties at once and read a number of letters from faithful friends throughout the country which were much appreciated by those present. In this way we heard from Norman Murray, Montreal, Canada; Julia C. Coon, Bartow, Fla.; Wm. H. Cox, Marietta, Ohio; Samuel D. Minks, Collins, Mo.; Mrs. Louise W. Terhune, Danville, Ky.; and L. K. Washburn, Revere, Mass., Editorial Contributor to The Truth Seeker, who sent a message that was highly entertaining and instructive.

COMMITTEES:

Press Committee:

D. W. Sanders,

J. A. Culbertson,

Dr. C. S. Carr.

Resolutions Committee:

Dr. T. J. Bowles,

Otto Wettstein,

J. O. Kathoe.

Entertainment Committee.

A. M. Stowe,

Cora M. Kail,

M. S. Wagner.

Election of Officers for the Ensuing Year:

Geo. O. Roberts, President, Dennison, Ohio.

J. H. Hunt, 1st Vice President, Massillon, Ohio.

Dr. J. B. Wilson, 2nd Vice President, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Miss Lou Lawrence, Secretary.

A resolution was passed to change the law whereby the President is given authority to appoint an Assistant Secretary if he thinks there is need for one.

Essay: The Bible in the Public School: This subject was answered by Mrs. Helen M. Lucas with a highly instructive paper dealing with our present public school system, taxation, expenditures, etc.

Short Speeches: Here was the surprise of the day. During the evening of the 11th four Hindoo students of the Ohio State University and one South American visited us in the parlor of the American Hotel. Sunday morning N. Chakrabarti, of Calcutta, India, was introduced by President Roberts and gave an instructive and humorous talk. He analyzed the story of creation, the god-idea, the fall of a certain angel, and holds the opinion that if the Christian teachings are true we must give the devil credit for our being knowing, seeing men and women. He compared the commercial trusts of our day with the great superstition trusts of the ages that have so long dominated the world of thought and made mental slaves out of the great majority of humanity.

Adjourn for Luncheon: At 12:00 o'clock the morning session adjourned for luncheon.

Afternoon Session.

Address: Decay of Orthodoxy, or End of Dogma: To this Dr. T. J. Bowles, of Muncie, Ind., responded. He gave a long and critical review of superstition, showing how it has always walked hand in hand with religions and ever operated to enslave the minds of men.

The Spirit of the Times: The writer responded and talked about thirty minutes comparing the thought that obtained in the early history of Christianity with that of the present. I attempted to show how Christianity had wormed itself out of Paganism by the aid of the sword in the hands of Constantine the Great; how people fought and perished as the results of Christian superstitions, and the intolerance of the orthodox. I attempted to show that the Spirit of the Times has aroused the people out of their slumbers, and that they are now asking questions; that intellectual day is with us, and that we are in need of a National Freethought Organization to control our resources and guide us safely on, and help in continuing the flood of radical criticism which is drowning the aged superstitions of the Christian past.

With the closing of this address adjournment was taken until the evening session.

Evening Session.

Materialism, Atheism, Agnosticism and Infidelity: Mr. Otto

Wettstein responded and hurled some telling shots at the basic principles of Christianity. In this address he completely upsets the theory of the resurrection of the body, the spirit-idea, and the many other superstitions with which Christianity is damned. While Mr. Wettstein's address was a most excellent one, I fear that many of those who heard him did not receive the full benefit of same on account of Mr. Wettstein's low voice, and it is to be hoped that he will forward his manuscript to some Freethought periodical for publication, which should be given as wide a distribution as possible as it is loaded with logic, reason and truth.

Correct Thinking: This subject was handled by that able scholar, editor, and lecturer, Mr. Parker H. Sercombe, Editor, The To-Morrow Magazine, Chicago, Ill. He did not confine himself strictly to Freethought, that is, as it pertains to religion. He contends that superstition in the nature of things is necessary and made the statement that he can show by history that superstition was at one time a saving power for the world. He begs of us to be patient and says that things will gradually evolve into a better and brighter state. He believes that all the creeds and denominations, every sacrifice of human lives, such as the burning of the Iroquois and the many other like disasters are necessary to bring about a better condition. He maintains that there is no democracy in this country and says that here we have a commercial deposition; that is, a mutual understanding among the money powers to work in harmony and thus control whatever their greed dictates.

Mr. Sercombe told about a Catholic woman living in Archer Avenue, Chicago, whose husband died some 30 years ago, and recently she had the misfortune to lose her son. By reason of the son's death she received \$1,100.00 life insurance, and within three months from the time she received this life insurance a Chicago priest had obtained \$400 from her for prayers forwarded to the Almighty asking him to reduce the temperature on the credulous woman's husband, who had been dead for 30 years. Mr. Sercombe is prosecuting this priest on the charge of false pretenses.

Mr. Sercombe also called attention to the fact that the birth rate among the Christian Scientists is greatly falling off. This he contends is due to the fact that so much blood is required to thinking about their "Science" that it takes the blood away from the genital organs and leaves them without sufficient supply to reproduce life. This easily accounts for the Catholics being such prolific breeders. They have ever let some one else do the thinking for them, and therefore, their blood supply can be used for reproductive purposes.

Mr. Sercombe also jolted Materia-Medica. He says that if the people will quit the use of tobacco, liquor, and other health destroyers and live temperate lives at all times, doctors could be dispensed with. He told of a record he has of aged people and a complete record of how they have lived. He recently went to Washington and proposed that a bureau of longevity be established, and at the head of this bureau he wants most anyone but a doctor. He wants some one who knows how to live.

Progress of Freethought and Free Press.

In the absence of Mr. John R. Charlesworth, who was kept at home on account of pressing business concerning the cause, Mr. D. W. Saunders, of Covington, Ind., talked extemporaneously on this subject, and read a message from Mr. Charlesworth.

Freethinkers' Funerals.

Dr. J. B. Wilson, of Cincinnati, O., was to have responded, but was unable to be present on account of the illness of his wife. This is a matter that Freethinkers should take more seriously, and the officers of the Buckeye Secular Union much regret that Dr. Wilson could not be present to tell those who have not given much thought to the event that must inevitably come at some time to the home of each and every one of us.

Before adjourning and after all the "Big Guns" had had their

say, many interesting short talks were made. Mr. Whicker, of Attica, Ind., made a short talk about Thomas Paine. He made such an impression on the audience and President Roberts, that the latter told him he would be invited to attend their next Paine celebration.

A resolution was adopted thanking the San Francisco Materialist Association for the interest entertained by them in our success, and through the medium of the Freethought press we wish to let them know that their cause is our cause.

A vote of thanks was extended to the officers of the Buckeye Secular Union for their faithful and untiring services during the past year.

The daily press of Columbus gave us considerable notice, but they seemed to have the habit of getting things badly mixed.

The visit of our Hindoo and South American friends was an agreeable surprise to all of us. They are not simply infidel to the religions common to their countries, but have rejected all ideas of supernatural powers and have wedded themselves to Truth as the guiding star of man's hopes. It means much to know that these foreign born men are becoming enthusiastic over our cause, and want to become active in freeing the minds of their fellow countrymen from the bonds of religious superstitions. Their work will do much to counteract the poisons being injected by the Christian missionaries. They can take back a different story about America's Jesus Christ and his wondrous works in this country than that carried by designing missionaries.

Reading of Letters.

During the convention, D. W. Saunders, reading clerk, read the following communications which had been sent to cheer the convention in its work:—

Good Cheer from Far West.

San Francisco, Cal.—Buckeye Secular Union Convention, Schenk's Hall, Columbus, O.—"Greetings to you all, comrades! Success is assured."—J. FRANTZ, Sec. S. F. Materialist Ass'n.

Praise and Encouragement.

REVERE, MASS.—Mr. Geo. O. Roberts: My Dear Friend: I mail you herewith a few lines to be read by you at your convention, if you deem them pertinent; but you are at liberty to light a fire with them instead if you wish. You have my sincerest sympathy in the work you are doing, and I trust that you and your fellow-workers will see your efforts crowned with the success they deserve. Always yours.—L. K. WASHBURN.

From the Sunny South.

BARTOW, FLA.—My greetings to the members of the Buckeye Secular Union and Materialist Association, assembled in convention at Columbus. It seems to me that Freethinkers, in looking back over the past year, can find reasons for the greatest encouragement and inspiration to renew their efforts for honest thought, a free press and free speech. As a member of the Materialist Ass'n, I endorse Mrs. Eliza M. Bliven's suggestion that her correspondence be lightened by State or sectional secretaries, and that such secretaries be considered Vice-Presidents of the National Materialist Ass'n. I vote that such secretaries be chosen by vote whenever possible, but that in States or sections where members have no present medium of getting in touch with each other, that they be appointed by Mrs. Bliven to serve until a vote can be taken. Cordially yours in the cause of Freethought.—JULIA C. COON.

A Message from Canada.

MONTREAL.—Buckeye Secular Union, Ladies and Gentlemen: Though absent in body, I am with you in spirit. If I were with you I would talk to you somewhat as follows: "The greatest blessing in this world, besides health, is liberty. A poor man with the bare necessities of life, with fresh air and sunshine, is better off than a prisoner with all the choice things the world provides.

(Continued on page 12.)

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Half column, whole column, or larger advertisements at special rates upon application.
The publisher has the right to reject any and all advertisements offered.

GENERAL BUSINESS RULES.

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Blade will be discontinued at the expiration of the term for which the subscription has been paid up in advance. The address slip on the paper will show subscribers the date of expiration of subscription. Back numbers or numbers omitted will be sent, if asked for, upon renewal in case of discontinuance.

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P. O. Box 393, Lexington, Ky.

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE CHURCHES?

Mr. Theodore Dreiser, editor of a woman's magazine called "The Delineator," recently addressed a personal letter to a number of clergymen, presumed to be prominent in their respective denominations, which included Catholic and Protestant, in which he submitted the question contained in the caption of this article, and as might be presumed, the several replies were to the effect that there was nothing whatever the matter with any of the churches. The Catholic claimed that his church was prosperous and growing. Each of the Protestant preachers made similar claims for their respective denominations, but with the different suggestions, or hints, that appear as one reads between the lines, we are bound to infer that no small disquietude exists.

The difficulty in finding a fair and intelligent answer to such a question lay in the fact that Mr. Dreiser addressed his inquiries to the wrong places. Thousands could have answered the question more intelligently, and with far less bias or prejudice, than those who have attempted to answer it. When a miner starts out to dig coal he does not climb a tree, but enters the mine wherein the coal lies buried, and there proceeds to dig. If an honest investigator wishes to solve a given problem he must examine on all sides and not undertake an *ex-parte* proceeding. The first essential is that the investigator shall be impartial concerning results. He must not start out with a view to finding "one" result, but any result that may confront him at the

close of his examination. But in the present case, we observe that Mr. Dreiser addressed his letter to preachers only, and that his sole purpose was to use the columns of his magazine to "assist in the broadening and bettering of religious condition," and to accomplish this end by attracting "the attention of those who are interested in church conditions."

Under such circumstances as these, what estimate of value can be made concerning the "answers" received? Could it possibly be expected that any preacher, who must be interested in "church conditions" to the extent of his salary, at least, would deliver himself of a rebuke to the church, or admit that the church was falling behind in the struggle of existence? Not a bit of it. The church exists today only by reason of its ability to make a bluff go. The sole strength of the church is to be found in the indifference of the people, the millions of the unchurched, who neither believe in the church or care what becomes of it. Few criminals enter a plea of guilty. It would be too much of an assumption that hired preachers would declaim against the institution that keeps them in luxury and idleness. And yet, some of them have gone so far as to give utterance to sentiments that indicate a lurking suspicion that all is not right with the church.

Cardinal Gibbons insists that no cause exists for complaint against the church of Rome. Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst suggests that the church should become more "spiritualized and aggressive." Rev. Josiah Strong, New York, admits that the church "lags behind the social spirit." Rev. Len G. Broughton, of Atlanta, Ga., gives a hint that both "faith and works are needed." Rev. Charles F. Aked, New York, suggests that much of the difficulty with which the church is now confronted would disappear if the "salaries of preachers were doubled." Rev. Russell H. Conwell, Philadelphia, remarks that the churches "too often pass by the real issues." "Gypsy Smith," the notorious evangelist, simply asks that the churches become "more Christ-like." Strange to say, that not one of them has struck the right key-note, and they never will so long as their minds are permitted to continue in the narrow channel prescribed for them by the denominations to which they belong.

The real matter with the church is that the great mass of the people outside of the church are growing better than the church. The people have adopted humanitarian ideals, a height to which no church has yet been able to climb. The more humanity a man or woman have in them the less use they have for the church and what it represents. It is the "doom of dogma" that reacts upon the church, and not until the church abandons its foolish dogmas will it assume an air of intellectual respectability as to demand public attention and consideration. The church sought to set a limit to human progress, but progress was irresistible, and that which stood in the way had to be moved aside or compelled to remodel its structure as to conform with the demands that progress made. The church that refused was destined for destruction. Only by adopting newer and higher ideals

has the church been able to survive the scholastic criticisms of the age. In the course of time the church will have so modified and remodeled its dogmatic foundation that it will cease to be "Christian", and humanity will be the gainer thereby. The extreme commercialism of some of the preachers we have above quoted, marks the true spirit of the church in these days, and constitutes a sure sign of that senility that comes with old age and marks a decrepid institution.

Search well and ye shall find, might be suggested to the editor of *The Delineator*, but if the investigation be continued, the opinions of those who have left the church because they cannot subscribe to either its doctrine or practice should also be secured in order that "the large circulation of the *Delineator*" might be used to wholesome advantage and afford its readers an opportunity of judging between the conflicting opinions entertained.

SECULAR UNION CONVENTION.

The Blade is appreciably indebted to J. Atwood Culbertson for the excellent detailed report of the proceedings of the Buckeye Secular Union Convention, held at Columbus, Ohio, Sunday, September 12. Owing to the fact that he was compelled to return to his home at Pittsburg in order to avoid interference with his business affairs, he compiled the report upon his arrival in Pittsburg, which naturally delayed it to such an extent that it did not reach us in time for our last previous issue. As it will come better late than never, we are pleased to give the report, in extenso, this week.

This report is an outline of what took place. We observe no minor detail. From it we are unable to learn the growth of the Union during the past year, its prospects for a further increase, both in finances and in members. Following the former convention, that of 1908, at Canal Dover, a number of clubs were organized and started to work. We regret that no itemized report was made as to their present number, and we express a fervent wish that considerable more of detail, as to practical business, and less speech-making, could have been indulged in. The officers of the Union can afford to consider the advisability of holding a convention for two days hereafter, instead of one, if so many speakers are to be scheduled, for we see by the report, compared with the program, that in spite of the failure of Dr. Wilson and the Blade's editor to be on hand, there were so many speakers that some who were on hand had to be crowded out of the program. One of the failings of Free-thought conventions for years, has been an utter lack of practical business methods, the sole idea appearing to be to meet, re-elect the old officers, adopt a set of resolutions, listen to a few speeches, good, bad and indifferent,—and adjourn. It is just such conditions as these that detract from a much larger attendance at Freethought conventions. Our experience has been that a national Freethought society, in annual convention, would meet with 25 or 30 members, nearly always composed of the same persons, with a

fair attendance from the locality to listen to the public addresses. Just as it has been found expedient to amend the constitution of the republic from time to time in order to meet present exigencies or emergencies, so must we, taking profit by past experiences, and as one of the Blade's correspondents aptly expresses it, learn what part to adopt and what part to avoid. It is the duty of the executive of each society, national, state or local, to plan, devise, design, and suggest, with a view to adoption, methods of work that shall be practical and tend to an extension of the organization and its principles.

Private advices inform us that the Columbus press got their reports of the convention "terribly mixed." Two of the newspaper clippings are before us. One is taken from the Ohio State Journal date September 12, the day of the convention. The other is from the Columbus News, same date. The first named paper is rabidly orthodox, and we have, at different times, criticised its editorial expressions. The latter is an independent paper and leans neither to one side or the other. The State Journal says there were only 50 present. The News says that over 100 were on hand Saturday night preceding the convention. The reporter who prepared the item for the State Journal is evidently a religious enthusiast, for his effort bears the marks of having made a deliberate attempt to report things that did not happen and to quote Freethinkers upon what they did not say. Our own knowledge of President Roberts, of Dr. Bowles, and the insight we have been given of Mr. D. W. Sanders, of Covington, Indiana, causes us to know that they did not say what the State Journal reporter quotes them as saying, and not in the form he has seen fit to put it. After all, the reporter may not be to blame, wholly, for we have been a reporter and we know what it is to hand in a "story" and then have the "copy and the text" mutilated by the editor who did not see and did not hear the things related. Yet, this is a sample of the treatment accorded Freethinkers by some of the papers in some cities. It is upon ourselves to compel respectful criticism instead of being ridiculed.

The Blade congratulates the officers, old and new, upon their election. We are pleased that the convention passed off so auspiciously, even though we did not get there to take a hand in it. We hope for even better results at the next convention. We congratulate Cleveland, the city by the big lake, upon having secured it. We promise now, accidents unforeseen not included, to be on hand and render all assistance possible to the work of the gathering. Cleveland is a liberal city. The convention ought to do good there. It ought to result in a local society, or better still, why not organize one in advance to receive it?

A HUMAN HYENA.

"I, the Lord, will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets."

Have a care, gentle Christian; this may be rank blasphemy to the earnest and sincere believer in the goodness

and wisdom of Jehovah, but the language is not our own. Observe the quotation marks! It is taken from the Old Testament of what is commonly known as "the bible."

Accepting the language quoted as representing the true Christian attitude and as furnishing men and women with a true picture of the character of the Christian god, we opine that one, Amos H. Gottschall, of Harrisburg, Pr., must be on the most intimate terms with Jehovah, a sort of boon companion, birds of one feather, or Jehovah has appointed him President of the recently organized Annanias Club. Any man who will knowingly and wilfully publish a lie is too unclean to be designated as carrion, unfit for the buzzards, a product of Sycorax and Satan, a disgrace even to such a parentage, and were he born in hades he would cast dishonor upon the place of his birth. Such must be the character of him whose name and address is given above.

Through a Blade subscriber, J. A. Osborn, of Greensboro, N. C., we are in receipt of a small yellow leaflet—and appropriate in color—which purports to give the "last words" that were supposedly uttered by some of the world's greatest men on their death beds. These "last words" are made up of a collection, including Christians and Infidels, among the latter being Paine, Voltaire, Mirabeau, Newport and Charteris. Of the three latter, we are sufficiently informed to question, merely to doubt, but as concerns both Paine and Voltaire we are in a position to know and can furnish acceptable proof. We here give, verbatim, what this lying apostle of a revengeful god is circulating concerning Paine and Voltaire:

"STAY WITH ME FOR GOD'S SAKE! I CANNOT BEAR TO BE LEFT ALONE. IT IS HELL TO BE ALONE."

These are given as the last words of Thomas Paine.

"I AM ABANDONED BY GOD AND MAN. I SHALL GO TO HELL."

These are ascribed as the "last words" of Voltaire.

Neither Paine or Voltaire gave utterance to any such sentiment; they did not use any such language, and as the burden of proof is upon him who makes the assertion, we challenge proof, or Amos H. Gottschall must stand condemned as a wilful falsifier, a base slanderer, but withal, a worthy representative of the Christian religion.

One would think that such a man as this could never find even a temporary lodgment in a land where liberty of conscience is supposed to reign supreme, or beneath the flag of a free people. History teaches that the more ridiculous a craze, foolish a fad, or base the lie, it will find some ready believers. Doubtless this Pennsylvania hypocrite will find some foolish and unthinking people to believe in him. The more's the pity of it. He is a Benedict Arnold to truth. His ancestry must have belonged to those ancient Hebrews whom the Lord of Hosts sent to deceive old King Ahab. His mind needs a bath; nay, it needs fumigation. Such a man should be given a rope, instructed carefully how to tie the knot and then invited to play the Judas act.

Either Amos H. Gottschall, at the time he prepared the leaflet, knew that he was about to publish and circulate a lie; or he was ignorant of the facts in each case, and just invented what he wanted. We are inclined to believe the latter view of the situation. Every quotation used bears the imprint of invention. The "last words" which he puts in the mouth of dying Christians are given to express a belief in Christ crucified and salvation through faith. The "last words" he puts in the mouth of dying Infidels are framed for the purpose of suggesting a horrible and fearful agony. The mind that could conceive such an argument is incapable of comprehending the eternal principles of truth, and would wilfully misrepresent for the greater glory of a god of supposed truth. That the dying expressions he attributes to both Paine and Voltaire are mere personal inventions is suggested by their newness and novelty. We have never heard or read of them before. We have read all we could get concerning both, on all sides, and we have never heard or read of these "last words" before getting this leaflet. The author must have a vivid imagination, but it would be advisable for him to turn it in another and different direction. Malice, like death, always loves a shining mark, and there is no sting so venomous as that springing from religious hatred.

That man who would slander the living without cause can be but a human vulture, but he who sinks into the grave and slanders the dead, is but a mangy fice and not worth the price of the powder to blow him into a warmer climate. Christians managed to learn and put into practice, the killing of reputations, finding that reputations were more easily slain than persons, and with less risks. They turned from murder to slander and infidel death-beds have afforded them a field for their operations.

The English language is lacking in words or sentences to fittingly describe the author of this yellow leaflet.

THE NEW ORGANIZATION.

Judging from the letters that continue to pour into the Blade office with reference to the proposed new organization of Freethinkers, the tide has turned towards it with increasing favor and but little now remains to be done but to meet, organize and get down to work.

The great bulk of those undertaking to write their opinions have not made mention of any place or locality for the meeting, and as many of them are unable to attend, it is a matter of indifference where it shall be held. The Blade has named St. Louis for the reason that the larger number have expressed themselves in favor of St. Louis. Since the last issue of the Blade has been mailed out, we have received a few suggestions that the place of meeting ought to be a little further east, and both Cincinnati and Indianapolis have received favorable mention. Either of the latter points would be more convenient to the Blade, as being much nearer, but we have not been guided by our own considerations or preferences, being desirous of conforming to the wishes of the majority, as expressed, and to call the

meeting for that place which will insure the largest attendance of those actively interested in the work. Of course, the only guide we could possibly have, would be the expressed opinions of those able and willing to attend. Whenever the meeting is held it will be less convenient for some than for others. St. Louis is but ten hours ride from Cincinnati, and while one is traveling that could make but very little difference except in the matter of railroad fare. All things fairly considered, we see no reason, that would be just, for changing the place of meeting, but if it is to be changed, the Blade invites suggestions to that end so that it can positively be known by the middle of October in order to give at least one month's notice to those who will attend, to admit of proper and necessary preparation.

Under these conditions the call for the meeting still stands in favor of St. Louis, on Sunday, November 14, at 9 o'clock a. m.

The next important consideration is the basis, or groundwork, of the organization. Upon what policy, what system, shall the organization take place? This is the greatest of all questions! Upon this depends its future weal or woe! One mistake may cost the organization its life! With a positive Freethought foundation, and an educative propaganda, we cannot get astray. Whether the organization shall adopt the theses of Prof. Haeckel, solely, or make any additions thereto, is a matter calling for the grave and serious consideration of all. The history of organized Freethought in America is strewn with wrecks of what might have been potential factors in an advocacy of the principles of Freethought, ruined, impaired, destroyed and sent into oblivion from different combining causes well known to those who took an active part therein. This experience is valuable if we but utilize the knowledge thus gained. For the purpose of aiding in the formative work of the organization, the Blade now suggests that each one come prepared with data or memoranda for the following outline, or plan:

1. Name of the organization.
2. Declaration of principles.
3. Plan of organization, including number, power and duties of the officers.
4. Method of securing membership, eligibility, etc.
5. Some method of raising funds sufficient to carry on its work.
6. Its character and method of propaganda.
7. Plan of expansion.
8. Provision for annual, or other meetings, under its auspices.
9. Men and women willing to accept and capable of performing the executive duties of the organization.

Ample time and opportunity is afforded between the present and the date set for the meeting, in which our friends can study over the items here enumerated, and as these constitute the very life of the organization they should be well considered by all.

Past experiences have taught those identified with previous organizations that a liberal support will be given the

movement, provided it is established on a proper basis,—broad, liberal, and yet strictly Freethought, and with the further provisions that those entrusted with its management be capable and competent and can convince the rank and file of American Freethinkers that they mean business.

This is no idle pastime. It is by far the most important step contemplated by Freethinkers during the past half century. It calls for and demands the united support of all. With this its success is assured. The Blade is not undaunted by reason of the fact that it has practically assumed this burden, alone, unaided by the Freethought press of the country, with the single exception of the Ingersoll Memorial Beacon. We believe that the time is ripe for such an organization, and so believing, we feel confident of an overwhelming success.

EDITORIAL POTPOURI.

Through the courtesy of the Truthseeker Company, we are in receipt of a valuable publication entitled "Free Press Anthology" by Theodore Schroeder, attorney for the Free Speech League of New York. As its name implies, it is a collection of choice extracts from eminent men of letters upon the subject under consideration. The author and compiler is well known to American Freethinkers, they who have borne the brunt of the battle for a free press. The selections have been carefully made and the comments by the author are apt and pertinent. This subject is of vast and growing importance in America, where, under the influence of the dominant superstition, there is a tendency to muzzle the press and restrict the use of the mails to a certain class of literature. The book consists of 270 pages and is well printed and handsomely bound. We are not advised as to its price, but this will be given upon application to the Truthseeker Company, 62 Vesey St., New York City. It is published under the auspices of the Free Speech League, and should have an enormous circulation.

It is evident that Rev. Thomas J. Glynn, of Brownsville, Pa., is in doubt about the existence of a creative deity, for in a recent comment upon what might result as following the discovery of the North Pole, he speaks of the wondrous, mysterious power of magnetism, wherein, he declares, "lies hidden its mysterious secret." To a god believer this should be no mystery, for god solves all mysteries. Without god it does become somewhat of a mystery which students of nature will have to solve.

Seven thousand dollars a year for preaching moonshine from an orthodox pulpit is excellent pay, yet this is the sum the congregation of the Second Presbyterian church of Pittsburg have contracted to pay the Rev. Ira Landrith, a Texan, for such services. That sum spent in the advocacy of truth would be far better.

The coming convention for the purpose of establishing a new Freethought society must be made as representative of Freethinkers as it is possible to get. Posterity will judge of our worth by what we do now. This is the accepted time.

Keep your eyes on that new subscriber and make up a list of the names of your Freethought friends to whom sample copies might be sent. We want the Blade's circulation to go soaring this winter. Remember, new subscribers at one dollar each for the first year.

(Continued from page 7.)

Some years ago I experimented on a young rat. I put him in a cage and surrounded him with all comforts—soda biscuits, water and cotton waste to keep him warm. He ate the biscuit out of my hand. Finally after petting him for about six months, I opened the cage for him. After watching me and the cage and walking all round the place quietly for about 15 minutes, he finally disappeared in the wood-pile and never came back. Only those who have been brought up in any of the orthodox religions—Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism—and afterwards came out and opposed them, can realize the hateful nature of these religions. Many who are inside are really quite sincere in believing these religions to be based on love and charity. Now it is absolutely impossible to inculcate liberal ideas inside any religion based on a supposed revelation. The primary object of a revelation is to STOP investigation. The attitude of modern Christians toward those who investigate, proves Christianity to be false. If they had sincere faith in the truth of their religion why should they be hostile to investigation? This is where my former associates and myself first parted company. I discovered they professed to be seekers after truth, but when any one made a very simple discovery, such as the Bible contradicting itself, they always took a hostile attitude. The great thinkers of the ages are on your side—Aristotle, Socrates, Confucius, Voltaire, Renan, Volney, Paine, Ingersoll. Let your watchword be "Liberty!" in all honorable affairs—not license in vice. There is only one philosophy in all ages—Right Living. The Bible is not a literature of right living. It is a record of Faith. Lust and Tyranny.—NORMAN MURRAY.

From the "Show Me" State.

COLLINS, MO.—Geo. O. Roberts, Pres. B. S. U.: I am glad to see your good work going along. I would like to hasten it all I can. I have been a Freethinker all my life, and am now in my 68th year. I have read Ingersoll's books, and I think he was one of the greatest men our nation ever produced. I named my youngest son after R. G. Ingersoll. I joined the Materialist Ass'n about six months ago and I consider it the right thing in the right place. I have been working for the M. A. and have taken about 15 names in as members and sent them up to our first Secretary, Eliza Mowry Bliven. I think her plan of organization is a good one and should be adopted.—SAMUEL D. MINKS.

Good Cheer from a Woman.

LIMA, O.—Mr. Roberts: Dear Sir: I received your welcome letter, but am sorry to say that it is impossible for either my husband or myself to attend the convention. We would love to go, and we thought for awhile that one of us could; that is why I was so long in answering your letter; but we knew at last that we had to give it up this year again; however we will keep on trying, and perhaps we will be able to attend them some time. It seems so strange that in as large a place as Lima there are so few outspoken Infidels. You can talk to them privately and they will agree with you on everything you say, but they don't want the public to know it. Mr. Evans says that all the Infidels in Lima belong to the church, and they are afraid to own up to their belief for fear of being turned out. Well, every one who knows Mr. E. and myself, know our belief. I don't know one woman either in Lima who is a true Infidel, and will say they don't believe that old story book, the bible. I have talked to all classes of women, and I find the worse a woman is, and the lower she is, the more she trusts in that dear Jesus to save her. I get so disgusted at them—I have no patience with such people. Some who are a disgrace to humanity expect to be saved; live in fear of hell all their lives, and depend on God's people's prayers to save them in the end. The doors of the church are open all the time to them, if they have a little money, and the church members are after them all the time. But they won't bother you after they discover you are an Infidel, and after you get a chance to tell

them why you are one. So the church people don't bother me any more, but I would love to meet a true woman Infidel. A few weeks ago, a man about 30 years old I judge, came to my back door. When I first saw him I took him to be what we call a dude tramp. But he was selling a religious paper to help him to raise money to study for the ministry. I told him I felt sorry for him, to think that he was wasting his young life for such a purpose, and told him that it would be much more honorable for him to go to work on the streets, and more money in it. And I could not refrain while speaking from looking down at the ragged lining of his coat. I told him if he really wanted to save the young men, whom he thought were going to hell, he could get closer to them and have a better chance to give them good advice by organizing a Freethought Society and inviting them to it, than by compelling them to listen to the gospel of Jesus Christ, for he knew that young men would not go to church and listen to a sermon that forbade them all enjoyments of this life, and then hell in the future. Well, he did not stop long after I told him this, but went on his way. My letter is long enough. So hoping to meet the ladies and gentlemen of the Buckeye Secular Union in the near future, and extending an invitation to one and all when in the city of Lima to come and see us, I remain very truly yours.—MRS. NELLIE EVANS, 540 W. Haller St. (P. S. Tell the ladies at the convention that I would love to be with them and a worker in the Union, yet I try to do all I can, as it is the cause of Freedom.)

Cheer from Old Kentucky.

DANVILLE, KY.—Mr. Geo. O. Roberts: Your letter and program of the B. S. U. received some days ago. I know it will be impossible for me to attend the convention in September, as I have trouble with my eyes, having them treated twice a week. I am a member of the C. of H., G. B., Kan., and owe the annual dues. Also subscribe for the Bluegrass Blade, and occasionally send Mrs. B., Brooklyn, Conn., a donation of stamps. Will send 50c in my next letter. Altogether, this is as much in this line as I can carry just now. I am a member of the M. A. Please accept this with best wishes; also thanks for writing. Yours.—MRS. LOUISE W. TERHUNE.

A Letter That Helps.

MARIETTA, O.—Mr. Geo. O. Roberts: My Dear Sir: In reply to your favor of recent date, will say it is impossible for me to attend this Seventh Annual Convention of the Buckeye Secular Union. I am so tied down at the present that I cannot get away for even one day, but my thoughts are on the convention and the grand and noble work that is before it. There is nothing that would give me more pleasure than to spend a day with the noble men and women who will be at this convention, and may the fruits of this gathering be felt throughout the length and breadth of our country, is the wish of your co-worker and friend.—WM. H. COX.

In a few more days and the last forms of Dr. Hausman's book, "Man's Origin and Destiny" will be off the press. It will then be rushed to the binding department and hurried to the point of mailing to subscribers. We ought to have a subscription list for the entire 1,000 copies that are to be printed. The very fact that it has stirred up some strenuous criticism shows that it is possessed of an individuality entirely its own.

Brighter grow the prospects for the new national organization and if we can only secure a fair representative attendance at St. Louis its future will be brighter still. Let all who are willing and able get to St. Louis at the appointed time.

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(By Julia C. Coon.)

It is most encouraging to note that Freethinkers are at last awakening to the importance of organization. The success of Mrs. Eliza M. Bliven in organizing Materialists into an active society of nearly 1,000 members at least proves the possibilities along this line, and whether Materialist or not, Freethinkers have reason to be congratulated on the Materialist Association.

But there is need of an active Freethought organization, that may include all who are in the fight against religious superstition and oppression, and will co-operate with the present societies—the Materialist Association, the Church of Humanity, and the Buckeye Secular Union, against Christian invasion of our public schools, church favoritism, religious legislation, and government protection of idolatry and superstition.

But there are several important questions that ought to be freely discussed by our Freethought press before such a society which ought to become a tremendous power for truth and liberty, is actually started. No one should join a society until they know just what it stands for, what objects it has in view, what classes may be included in its membership, and what expenses are liable to be connected with it.

If the word Freethought appears in the name, the question immediately arises:—Who are Freethinkers, and whom may Freethought include? The name is becoming very popular. An Adventist declared to me a few days since that he was a Freethinker! I would have a great deal of difficulty in making Adventists accord with my ideal of Freethought, as I would also Unitarians, Spiritualists and praying Deists. My reason is, that all who depend or have any tendency to depend on non-earthly beings for guidance, strength or protection, cripple to just that extent their own natural reason and judgment, and can not be Freethinkers in the broadest sense of the term. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that a few, even after abandoning belief in gods and a future life, show themselves to be narrow bigots, inclined to deny the privilege of Freethought to others.

One of the reasons often advanced for Freethought organization is that a strong society may have some weight in petitioning against undesirable legislation. Personally I have little sympathy with this view. The people have spent very much time and money petitioning their servants to do this

and not to do that. It is somewhat as it would be if a woman should fill her house with servants fresh from the jails, and then should write out an eloquent petition and read it off to them, imploring them not to steal all her silverware. The place to make petitions count is at the polls, and as long as a majority vote for religious oppression, we will get it. The only hope is to educate the majority.

This leads to what should be the pre-eminent work of a Freethought organization—the preservation and publication of our best literature in the most attractive form, and the selling of it to christians in a business-like way. Christians manage to make the heathen pay for their conversion to christianity, and while Freethinkers must show christian fraud, I believe our literature could be put in such form that it could be sold to the general public, in place of the indiscriminate and wasteful distribution. When the readers pay the cost of printing, we can reach thousands where we now reach tens, and that which has a cost price is more highly valued.

With the Materialist Association and the Church of Humanity to blaze the way—their successes adapted and their failures avoided, the path ought to be comparatively easy for a Freethought organization. The rapid growth of the Materialist Association over the Church of Humanity is mostly due to the absence of any initiation fee or annual dues, and it is to be hoped that Freethinkers will never cripple their organization by such a premise. Nor is this the only or the chief reason against tax. It is generally the case that the assumed right to tax leads to the assumed right to waste and to misuse. And again, the publishing of this fee requirement, and all calling for funds or begging of any description, would almost ruin our papers for propaganda purposes.

Recognizing the fact that Freethinkers are generally far from rich (they do not employ christian methods in getting ahead), the organization should be planned on the most economic basis possible. Salaried officers should never be installed, for the reason that every one should help push the work to the best of his ability, and not depend on leaders. All those who have ever been a force toward progress so far have taken their salary chiefly in christian abuse.

The plan adopted by the Materialist Association, of having everyone who wins new members counted secretaries, has proved so successful that it is worthy of attention, as is also the plan of dividing the work of enrolling members by having one leading secretary in each state or section.

In view of the wide distances that divide Freethinkers, it would undoubtedly be wise to have each accorded a vote by letter or postal on all questions of importance and

thereby get the wish of the actual majority. All expenditures of Association funds should be decided in this way, and an effort might be made to conduct the organization on more democratic lines than have ever yet been undertaken by any society.

It may be question whether it is a wise move to call a convention at the start of such an organization. The number able to attend such a convention would necessarily be very small compared with the number who would wish to join, not because the interest is faint, but because the distance and expense make it impossible.

Personally, I think the first move ought to be the enlisting of the entire Freethought press, if possible, their enrollment, and an extended discussion of ways and means. Then by another fall, we ought to be able to unite with the Materialist Association, the Buckeye Secular Union, and the Church of Humanity in such a ringing convention as will cause the world to sit up and take notice.

So my vote is for a National Freethought Association, neither too narrow nor too broad, but composed of the actual Freethinkers—those who are liberated from church, gods and spirits, and who will work to the end that all people may be so liberated.

Bartow, Fla.

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